

# PTERYPLEGIA: 5

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Or, the ART of

## Shooting-Flying.

A

# P O E M.

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By Mr. *MARKLAND*, A. B. and formerly Fellow of *St. John's College* in *Oxford*.

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Ἦψι δ' ὑπαὶ νεφέων ἴδετο τρήρῳνα πέλειαν,

Τὴν ῥ' ὄγε δινεύσσαν ἀπὸ πτέρυγος βάλε μέσσην,

Ἀντικρὺ δὲ διήλθε βέλος.

*Hom. Iliad. ψ.*

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L O N D O N:

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PTERYPTER

On the

Shooting

P. O. F. M.

By Mr. M. A. K. and son  
and Mr. F. H. and son

London

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To all Fair

# SPORTSMEN.

GENTLEMEN,

**G**IVE me Leave to strengthen your Memories, and confirm your Experience, with a Sett of Speculations, newly drawn from Darknes and Confusion, into the Advantage of a Clear Light and Regular System. They contain many demonstrable Truths, which never before made any Figure abroad in Terms of Art, or were reduc'd to any Shape or Expression. On this Account I might here very reasonably plead the Novelty of the Subject, in Defence and Excuse of the Performance, having had no Path or Footsteps to guide me, but my own long Experience; and might with less Vanity and more Propriety of Language than most Writers, take to my self the Title of an Author; were it not the utmost of my Ambition only to oblige and inform my Fellow-Sportsmen, and to communicate freely and honestly what Knowledge I have treasured up in this, hitherto unexplain'd, and Difficult Mystery.

Nevertheless, I am sensible, there's no becoming Sportsmen by Book. You may here find the Rules and proper Directions for that End; but Practice alone can make you Masters. Bare Theory may as soon Stamp a General, as a Marksman.

No



No—You must Sweat and be Cold, must Sweat again, and be Cold again, before you can arrive at any Degree of Perfection in this Art, I have furnish'd you with all Necessary Tools of the Trade, but 'tis Time and Experience must Finish and Accomplish the Workmen; and even after Seven Years Industry, you will find but too many Occasions to prove you still deficient and imperfect. 'Tis but too true, (and you must all of you bear me witness to the Truth of this) that even the best Marksmen have their Chronical Miscarriages. In some Hands, the ill Fortune of the first Shoot determines and influences the Success of all the rest; And one may take a certain sort of Augury from the Escape and Flight of the first Mark. The natural Cause of this seems to proceed from a Disorder in the Animal Spirits, occasion'd by the Original Disappointment, and which in some Men is irrecoverable for that whole Day. As, on the contrary, a prosperous Hit shall have the very opposite Effect, and induce such an easy Serenity and steady Assurance, as carry inevitable Death with 'em for many Hours after.

On this Occasion I have often wonder'd, why the French, of all Mankind, should alone be so expert at the GUN, I had almost said infallible. It's as rare for a profess'd Marksman of that Nation to miss a Bird, as for one of Ours to kill. But, as I have been since inform'd, they owe this Excellence to their Education. They are train'd up to it so very Young, that they are no more surpriz'd or alarm'd with a Pheasant, than a Rattle-Mouse. The best Field-Philosophers living; for they are always there Masters of their Temper.

However, I have now, at last, broke the Ice, and put my Young Countrymen in the Way to rival that Volatile Nation in their peculiar Accomplishment.

I intended (according to Custom) an Invocation to APOLLO, our great Exemplar in this Art, who shot Icarus Flying many hundred Tears ago; but considering, upon second Thoughts, how many Snites, Woodcocks, Partridges, Pheasants, Polts, &c. I had lost upon His Occasion, and how often I had been glad of the Prophane Opportunity of turning my Backside on his Godship; I concluded, I had little reason to expect his Assistance.



## The DEDICATION.

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*The Muses having all of 'em Wings, as is evident from the Sublime Flights they take, I had less Hopes of their Inspiration. Indeed I sensibly perceiv'd I had disoblig'd 'em, and that they had withdrawn their Favours, upon Supposition, I suppose too, of some possible Danger they might be in by my means. However, their Ladyships were mistaken, since they were no more concern'd in this Subject, than Flying-Coaches, Flying-Posts, Flying-Clouds, Flying-Camps, Flying-Reports, or Flying-Bottles of Ale; wieh forty other Material and Immaterial Beings, to which the Poets have fasten'd Wings; as Time, Fame, Money, Love, &c. In short, Gentlemen, in consideration of the Nature of the Subject, you must not expect a very fanciful or entertaining Poem; but, this I will be bold to say, that as to the Matter and Substance of it, if what you find here be well Read, Digested, and Remember'd, it will then prove truly Useful and very Serviceable.*



# TO THE EDUCATION

The first condition of a successful education is that the student should be interested in the subject. If the student is not interested, he will not learn. The second condition is that the student should be able to understand the subject. If the student cannot understand the subject, he will not learn. The third condition is that the student should be able to apply the knowledge he has gained to practical situations. If the student cannot apply his knowledge, he will not learn. The fourth condition is that the student should be able to communicate his knowledge to others. If the student cannot communicate his knowledge, he will not learn. The fifth condition is that the student should be able to solve problems. If the student cannot solve problems, he will not learn. The sixth condition is that the student should be able to work independently. If the student cannot work independently, he will not learn. The seventh condition is that the student should be able to work in a team. If the student cannot work in a team, he will not learn. The eighth condition is that the student should be able to work under pressure. If the student cannot work under pressure, he will not learn. The ninth condition is that the student should be able to work under supervision. If the student cannot work under supervision, he will not learn. The tenth condition is that the student should be able to work under time constraints. If the student cannot work under time constraints, he will not learn. The eleventh condition is that the student should be able to work under financial constraints. If the student cannot work under financial constraints, he will not learn. The twelfth condition is that the student should be able to work under physical constraints. If the student cannot work under physical constraints, he will not learn. The thirteenth condition is that the student should be able to work under emotional constraints. 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# PTERYPLEGIA:

Or, the ART of

## SHOOTING-FLYING.



I L E N T and Grey the Morning's Dawn  
appear'd ;

No Sun was promis'd, and no Wind was  
heard.

The Archer-God shot forth no jealous  
Beam

To dazle and confound the *Markfman's* Aim,  
Nor Friendly Blasts conceal'd the Springing Game.

My Friend and I, with hopeful Prospect rose,

And scorn'd the longer Scandal of Repose :

No dull Repast allow'd ; our Tackle all

O'er Night prepar'd, the chearful Dogs we call

In a close Pocket snuggs the cordial Dram,

Youth to the Old, and Crutches to the Lame ;

Low-leathern-heel'd our lacquer'd Boots are made,

Mounted on tott'ring Stilts raw Freshmen tread :

Firm



Firm Footing an unshaken Level lends;  
 But Modish Heels are still the *Woodcock's* Friends!  
 Our Shot of sev'ral sorts, half round the Waste,  
 In Ticking semicircularly plac'd,  
 Embrac'd and poiz'd us well. Silent we go,  
 As when *Apollo* from his Silver Bow  
 Wrapp'd in a Cloud, the *Grecian* Camp dismay'd,  
 And unperceiv'd thro' Darkness struck 'em dead.  
 No flapping Sleeves our ready Arms controul;  
 Short Cuffs alone prove fatal to the Fowl.  
 Nor arm'd in warm Surtout, we vainly fear  
 The Sky's Inclemency, or *Jove* severe:  
 Active and free our Limbs and Muscles are,  
 Whilst Exercise does glowing Warmth prepare.  
 To such Examples You who dare not yield,  
 Sneak to the Chimney-side, and quit the Field.

Our Sport almost at hand, we charge the Gun;  
 Whilst ev'ry well-bred Dog lies quietly down.  
 Charge not before. If over-Night the Piece  
 Stands loaded, in the Morn the Prime will hiss:  
 Nor Prime too full; else you will surely blame  
 The hanging Fire, and lose the pointed Aim.  
 Shou'd I of This the Obvious Reason tell,  
 The caking Pressure does the Flame repel,  
 And *Vulcan's* lam'd again by his own Steel.  
 Yet cleanse the Touch-hole first: A Partridge Wing  
 Most to the Field for that wise purpose bring.  
 In Charging, next, good Workmen never fail  
 To ram the Powder well, but not the Ball:  
 One Third the well-turn'd Shot superior must  
 Arise, and overcome the Nitrous Dust,

Which,

Which, dry'd and season'd in the Oven's Heat  
 Has stood in close-mouth'd Jarr the dampless Night,  
 Now search for Tow, and some old Saddle pierce,  
 No Wadding lies so close, or drives so fierce.  
 And here be mindful constantly to Arm  
 With Choice of Flints, a Turn-screw, and a Worm;  
 The accidental Chances of the Field,  
 Will for such Implements Occasion yield.

And now, our Pieces loaded, we divide  
 The Rows between, each takes a different Side,  
 Careful, yet Unconcern'd; not Idle, still  
 Unbent, with Diligence enough to Kill.  
 Learn'd to *Take Time*, the Chief and Only Rule  
 First to be practis'd in the Marksman's School.  
 Most Youths undisciplin'd, the Sport confound,  
 By random Firing on improper Ground:  
 For as in Flights of hasty Wit, the same  
 Examin'd, will be Parallel in Game.

A *Stoick's* Temper shou'd the Sportsman crown;  
 Th' Indifference of a Husband, nooz'd a Moon;  
 A Foot-Post's Heels; with such quicklively Eyes,  
 By which the piercing Basilisk descries;  
 And the Fatigue will the strong Sinews ask  
 Of *Hercules*, proportion'd to the Task.  
 Eager Pursuit still over-shoots Success,  
 And timorous Distrust will *Under-miss*.  
 A loit'ring Fool should no Forgiveness find;  
 Nor can I have scarce Pity for the Blind.  
 The Weak and Crazy shou'd be kept at home,  
 And fed with Jellies till their Strength is come.

Whoever fails in any single Part,  
Can ne'er commence a Master of this Art.

See a Cock-Pheasant sprung ! He mounts, — He's }  
down, }  
Trust to your Dogs ; quick, quick — Recharge your }  
Gun, }  
Before the Air gets in, and damps the Room.  
The Chamber hot, will to the Powder give  
A Benefit, and will the same receive :  
The open Touch-hole too, if haste you make,  
Its little fatal Train will freelier take.  
Oft have I seen th' undocumented Swain  
Feath'ring the Parts, and cleansing of the Part,  
Until the cooling Piece grew moist again.  
The tardy Charge wip'd that cold Sweat away,  
And grew it self half *Wild-fire* by the way.

Besides, suppose that Bird, but slightly touch'd,  
I'th' Body, mazy there sits slyly couch'd,  
When with your Gun discharg'd, you come to take  
Him up, he shall a second Effort make ;  
With unrecover'd Flight shall mount away,  
While you in vain lament th' escaping Prey ;  
In some close Covert, he unfound shall lie,  
And, subtle in his Dissolution, die.

Woodcocks, and Snites and Partridge rarely run  
When crippl'd in the Wing, and fairly down,  
But Pheasants seldom lie : Oft'times in vain  
I've fought the headlong Fowl, concluded slain.

There



There sprung a single Partridge—ha! she's gone!  
 Oh! Sir, you'd Time enough, you shot too soon;  
 Scarce twenty Yards in open Sight!—for Shame!  
 Y'had shatter'd Her to Pieces with right Aim!  
 Full forty Yards permit the Bird to go,  
 The spreading Gun will surer Mischief sow;  
 But, when too near the flying Object is,  
 You certainly will mangle it, or miss;  
 And if too far, you may so slightly wound,  
 To kill the Bird, and yet not bring to Ground.

As Virtue 'twixt two Vices does consist,  
 The same in Shooting justly is confest;  
 But when the Trees diversify the Scene,  
 No Mortal there can keep the Golden Mean;  
 Spite of the Rules of Art he must let fly  
 In one of the Extreame, too far, or nigh,  
 Must nimbly take advantage of what Leave,  
 The Opens, Glades and Interstices give.  
 Where Woodcocks dodge, there Distance knows no Laws;  
 Necessity admits no room for Pause.  
 But in the Ersh of Barley, Oats, or Wheat,  
 Where Quails delicious, and sweet Partridge sit,  
 Or, in the Springs, where bores the charming Snite;  
 Or, where the glorious Pelt in open Heath  
 Moves sweetly in an even Line from Death;  
 There, if the Goodness of the Piece be prov'd,  
 Pursue not the fair Mark till far remov'd;  
 Raise the Mouth gently from below the Game,  
 And readily let fly at the first Aim.

But

But without Aim admit no random Shoot;

'Tis just to judge before you execute.

The Wabbling Cock is indirect in Flight,  
Like painted Lightning flies th' evading Snite,  
Till Distance makes secure, and heals the Fright;  
Then gently in a level Course they fly,  
And each ev'n by the slightest Stroke will die.  
By Length and Motion of the Wings betray'd,  
Twenty shall tumble main'd, for one shot dead.

Soon as the Snite receives a mortal Wound,  
With open Wings unmov'd, she skirms around,  
And where she falls, lies dead upon the Ground;  
With Pinions wide expanded, like the Kite,  
She smoothly swims, then dies, quite spent in Flight.

Five gen'ral sorts of *Flying Marks* there are;  
The *Lineals* two, *Traverse* and *Circular*;  
The Fifth *Oblique*, which I may vainly teach;  
But Practice only perfectly can reach.

When a Bird comes directly to your Face,  
Contain your Fire a while, and let her pass,  
Unless some Trees behind you change the Case.  
If so, a little space above her Head  
Advance the Muzzle, and you strike her dead.  
Ever let Shot pursue where there is room;  
Marks, hard before, thus easy will become.

But, when the Bird flies from you in a Line,  
With little Care, I may pronounce her thine.

Observe the Rule before, and neatly raise  
 Your Piece, till there's no *Open Under-space*  
 Betwixt the Object and the *Silver Sight*;  
 Then send away, and timely stop the Flight.

Th' unlucky *Cross Mark*, or the *Traverse Shoot*,  
 By some thought easy; yet admits Dispute,  
 As the most common Practice is, to Fire  
 Before the Bird, will nicest time require:  
 For, too much Space allow'd, the Shot will fly  
 All innocent, and pass too nimbly by;  
 Too little Space, the Partridge, swift as Wind,  
 Will dart athwart, and bilk her Death behind.  
 This makes the Point so difficult to guess;  
 'Cause you must be exact in Time, or miss.  
 In other Marks there's a less desp'rate Stake,  
 Where the swift Shot will surely *Overtake*;  
 Nor need the Sportsman such strict Measures make:  
 And better will the *Lineal Aim* allow  
 A Hundred Inches, than the *Cross-Mark* Two.  
 Full Forty Yards, or more to th' Left or Right,  
 The Partridge then *Obliquely* takes her Flight.  
 You've there th' Advantage of a *Sideling Line*,  
 Be careful, nor her inward Side decline:  
 Else just behind the Bird the Shot will glance:  
 Nor have you any Hopes from *Flying Chance*,

Thus in the Mark which is stil'd *Circular*,  
 There's nothing more requir'd, but steady Care  
 T' attend the Motion of the Bird, and gain  
 The best and farthest *Lineal Point* you can;



Carrying your Piece around, have Patience till  
The Mark's at best Extent, then fire and kill.

See, *Jewell* stands a Point:—A Covey!—Stay,  
And take this sober Caution by the Way:  
When in a Cloud the scatt'ring Birds arise,  
And various Marks distract the choos'ing Eyes,  
That Choice confine to One Particular;  
Most who confide in fooling Fortune, err.  
Young greedy Novices, who often hope  
By random Fate to pick a Number up,  
Amaz'd, behold none bounding on the Ground,  
Whilst many a Bird drags off her mortal Wound,  
Experienc'd Sportsmen will of one make sure,  
Rest honestly content of one secure:  
The scatter'd Covey will no longer wait  
The Nets; but may be theirs by future Fate.

But hold, my Spirits fail! a Dram, a Dram,  
A Sup of Vigour to pursue the Game.  
Enough, enough—A Gulp too much is worse  
Than none at all, like one help'd o'er his Horse,  
Sportsmen, beware; for the superfluous Glass  
Will blunt the Sight, and ev'ry Object glaze,  
Whilst all things seem around one undistinguish'd Mass.  
Th' unpointed Eye once dull'd, farewell the Game:  
A Morning Sot may shoot, but never aim;  
Marksmen and Rope-dancers with equal Care  
Th' insidious fasting Bottle shou'd forbear.  
Else each, who does the Glass unwisely take,  
E'er Noon a false and fatal Step will make;

The

The first will *Turkeys* slay, and make *Piggs* squeak,  
The latter, ten to one, will break his Neck.

Yet, how my Blood's on fire! oh! how I hate  
I'th' midst of Sport to see a Glutton eat,  
When Pheasants mount, and the Gay Birds arise,  
To see a Coxcomb paring of his Cheese!  
Scourge, Beadle, from the Field, that cramming Fool,  
Or pack the Mouncher back again to School,  
All that he chews to me proves pois'nous Food,  
And does Me much more Mischief than Him Good.

Halloo—Halloo—See, see from yonder Furze  
The Lurchers have alarm'd and started Puss!  
Hold! What d'ye do? Sure you don't mean to Fire!  
Constrain that base, ungenerous Desire,  
And let the Courser and the Huntsman share  
Their just and proper Title to the Hare.  
Let the poor Creature pass, and have fair Play,  
And fight the Prize of Life out her own way.  
The tracing Hound by Nature was design'd  
Both for the Use and Pleasure of Mankind;  
Form'd for the Hare, the Hare too for the Hound:  
In Enmity each to each other bound:  
Then he who dares by different means destroy  
Than Nature meant, offends 'gainst *Nature's Law*.

Come on—'Tis *Basking Time*, the Sultry Morn  
Draws forth the Coveys from the leaning Corn,  
Or round the Wheat they sit and taste the Sun,  
Or Clucking to the neigh'ring Coppice run,  
And there they spurn the Dust and waste the Noon.

Away;

Away; some let us kill, and some disperse,  
And laugh, and eat our Gains, while Setters curse.

And now the golden Harvest cracks the Barn,  
Whilst at the Door stout Flail-Men bang the Corn:  
The Leazers now have giv'n their Gleaning o're,  
The Netters too have plentifully sworn,  
When the shy Birds, rais'd at the Sound of Down,  
Clapp'd their loud Wings, and mock'd the Horseman's  
Frown.

I'th' Ev'ning's Close, soon after *Phœbus* fall,  
Watchful attend the Partridge skreaking Call.  
The Coveys for their Roofing Place prepare,  
The Old ones send their Summons from afar,  
And to their scatter'd Young give Signals of their Care,  
Look narrowly thro' the Remains of Day,  
You'll see the packing Kinsfolk-skirm away;  
Mark well the Place, the Morning will afford  
An early Banquet for the next Day's Board.  
But in the high Meridian of the Day  
The scraping Baskers in the Hedges lay,  
Full in the Sun's bright Eye: No Noise permit;  
Noise makes the Birds their dusty Mansions quit,  
Or nimbly run, or use the Wings in Flight.  
Not so the fullen Quail, who lies so close,  
That she almost abides the Lurcher's Nose;  
With Patience hunt: The dear delicious Prey  
Will doubly for the cheap Attendance pay.  
Short Flights she takes, and you can hardly fail  
To spring her twice, if you observe her Fall.

But A



But see, the stiffen'd Earth by Frost is bound,  
 The flocking Larks bestrew and peck the Ground  
 (A feather'd Harvest) with mysterious Treat  
 Best nourish'd, when they little have to eat.  
 The ambient Air their closing Pores constrains,  
 And friendly Cold shuts up the breathing Veins;  
 From hence th' imprison'd Nutriment proceeds,  
 And ev'ry Grain its Weight in Fatness breeds;  
 But in the compass of one melting Day,  
 That Richness all perspires, and flies away.

Now let the Sportsman so dispose his Charge;  
 As may dispense the Circling Shot at large;  
 The Shot and Powder well proportion'd be,  
 Neither exceeding in the Quantity;  
 Distruction thus shall a wide Compass take,  
 And many little bleeding Victims make.

And now proceed, not by Approach, but Storm;  
 Run, briskly fire amidst the rising Swarm,  
 And you will treble Slaughter thus perform. }  
 When each Bird moves expansive in the Air, }  
 And the whole Mark lies open, rais'd and fair, }  
 For one o'th' Ground, you have ten Chances there.

Down, down, a Mallard comes; contain your Arm,  
 His Breast with Feathers arm'd no Shot can harm.  
 Assault him from behind, where less secure,  
 He can the piercing Message less endure.

The Weather's chang'd--The Winds more briskly blow  
 The Snites against the Wind will move but slow,

Thin cover'd Snites ne'er travel down the Wind,  
 Wife to maintain their Garments close behind.  
 The flirting Woodcocks now short Flights will take,  
 And pearching Pheasants to the Trees will make.  
 Turn the *wild Poultry* from the Bough—Away  
 For shame, ne'er let that bawling Lurcher bay,  
 Poachers alone surprize the gazing Prey.

*Jove!* Lay these ratt'ling Gusts, and smoothe the Sies;  
 We cannot hear the whirring Partridge rise;  
 The flashing Prime too in our Faces drives,  
 And now it mizzles—the damp Powder gives.  
 We cannot keep our Fire-locks dry — Away,  
 Out Sport is over, 'tis in vain to stay.

Now that the pushing Winds distort the Aim,  
 And wrap the palsy'd Barrels from the Game:  
 O'er Bowl of Punch suppos'd, or Tub of Ale  
 Let us relate an useful *Winter-Tale*.  
 Matters of Fact, and Modern Fate my Verse  
 Shall with exact Integrity rehearse.  
 The strong Impressions may rash Youth prepare  
 Safely to use the dang'rous Gun with Care.  
 Ye Parents, let your Sons these Stories know,  
 And thus you may prevent the distant Woe.

A blooming Youth, who had just past the Boy,  
 The Father's only Child and only Joy,

As he intent design'd the Larks his Prey,  
 Himself as sweet and innocent as They,  
 The fatal Powder in the Porch of Death,  
 Having in vain discharg'd its Flash of Breath,  
 The tender Reas'ner, curious to know  
 Whether the Piece were really charg'd, or no,  
 With Mouth to Mouth apply'd, began to blow.  
 A dreadful Kiss! For now the silent Bane  
 Had bor'd a Passage thro' the whizzing Train,  
 The Shot all rent his Skull, and dash'd around his Brain!

Unguarded Swains! oh! still remember this,  
 And to your Shoulders close constrain the Piece,  
 For *lurking Seeds of Death* unheard my hiss.  
 The Gun remov'd, may in the firing fly,  
 Wrench from your Hands, and wound the Standers by.  
 Once more let me instruct th' uncaution'd Youth;  
 Be *Magd'line's* College Witness of the Truth:  
 For there th' unhappy careless Sacrifice  
 Under th' Inscription of the Story lies;  
 Which, tho' not in Particulars express'd,  
 May by the gen'ral Meaning thus be guess'd.  
 As thro' the Brambles or the intangling Brake  
 The heedless *Strephon* did his Passage make.  
 Th' unguarded Cock beneath himself he drew  
 Against some Sprigg, and thus himself he flew!

Forgive me, if I longer must detain  
 And tire thy Patience with this tragick Strain,  
 Since mine the Labour is, but thine may be the Gain.



Varied and frequent is the Accident  
 Which ev'ry where attends the *Hammer'd Flint*.  
 The neighb'ring Sparks into the Pan may fall,  
 And the loose Piece with Mischief may recoil.  
 Th' unheeded Muzzle pointed at a Friend,  
 May instantly unthought Destruction send.  
 Sometimes the Cock may at half-bent go down,  
 True Sportsmen therefore always mount the Gun.  
 They walk with Flint by Guardian Thum restrain'd,  
 With Piece well handl'd, ready at Command,  
 Nor need their jeopardiz'd Companions dread  
 Their tripping Heels, or the strain'd Ankles tread.

Such sad Events in ev'ry Place have been,  
 Such fatal Ends have darken'd ev'ry Scene,  
 That the good-natur'd *Muse*, cou'd not forbear  
 T' awake your Caution, and alarm your Care,  
 Shepherds, farewell: Go, and her Words preserve;  
 The *Muse* at least will your best Thanks deserve.

*F I N I S.*

